



Nevada Operations Office News

National Nuclear Security Administration

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DOE and State of Nevada Agree to Pursue Accelerated Cleanup Strategy for Nevada Test Site

DOE Sets Aside Additional \$33 Million from Accelerated Cleanup Reform Account; Nevada Test Site Budget to Increase to \$94 Million

Following a series of meetings between the Department of Energy's (DOE), National Nuclear Security Administration Nevada Operations Office (NNSA/NV), and the state of Nevada officials, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham announced today that a Letter of Intent has been signed to enter into an agreement to accelerate cleanup at the Nevada Test Site. Under the agreement, the parties will work to complete cleanup operations at the site by 2010, instead of the previously planned 2020.

This is the fourth agreement reached under the Department's Environmental Management Accelerated Cleanup Program, whose goal is to streamline operations by working with states and regulators to clearly target and reduce the greatest health and environmental cleanup risks at the country's Cold War nuclear weapons production facilities. The Energy Department has already signed Letters of Intent with the Hanford and Oak Ridge Sites, as well as the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL).

"This agreement provides the framework necessary to accelerate cleanup and it is a major step to effectively reduce health risks and expedite the environmental cleanup of the Nevada Test Site," Secretary Abraham said. "Working with the states and other regulatory agencies, DOE is proposing a new way of doing business, leading to greater accountability, responsibility, and opportunities for both the Department and the states."

The Department is setting aside \$33 million under the Accelerated Cleanup Reform Account for the Nevada Test Site. This will increase the total environmental management budget to about \$94 million in Fiscal Year (FY) 2003.

The parties to the agreement will work closely with regulators to ensure all activities are compliant with applicable state and federal regulations and protect human health and the environment. Risk reduction is the primary focus of the accelerated cleanup program.

Coupled with the other already announced accelerated cleanup plans, this agreement brings the total to \$759 million dedicated out of the \$800 million accelerated cleanup account. Secretary Abraham has formally requested from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) that additional money will be necessary to fund future accelerated cleanup projects, as outlined under the Department's Environmental Management Top-to-Bottom Review and the FY 2003 Budget Request approved by OMB.

Initiatives for accelerating cleanup and reducing risks under the Nevada plan include the following:

- Accelerate corrective actions at Industrial Sites by two years, with anticipated completion in FY 2008;
- Implement negotiated corrective action strategy for the Underground Test Area Project;
- Advance corrective actions for plutonium-contaminated soils by 10 years, with completion anticipated in 2010; and
- Move up scheduled activities to support shipment of transuranic waste to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) by two years, with project closure scheduled for 2007.

“Accelerated cleanup agreements will accomplish results in a manner that is safe, protective of human health and the environment, and in compliance with State and Federal environmental laws,” Abraham said. “The Nevada Test Site pact creates a framework for all Department sites to follow in moving toward an accelerated cleanup plan because it provides the necessary level of detail and criteria to reach a commitment to faster, safer cleanup.”